

Site No. 21

GODDARD PARK

Warwick
Ives Road



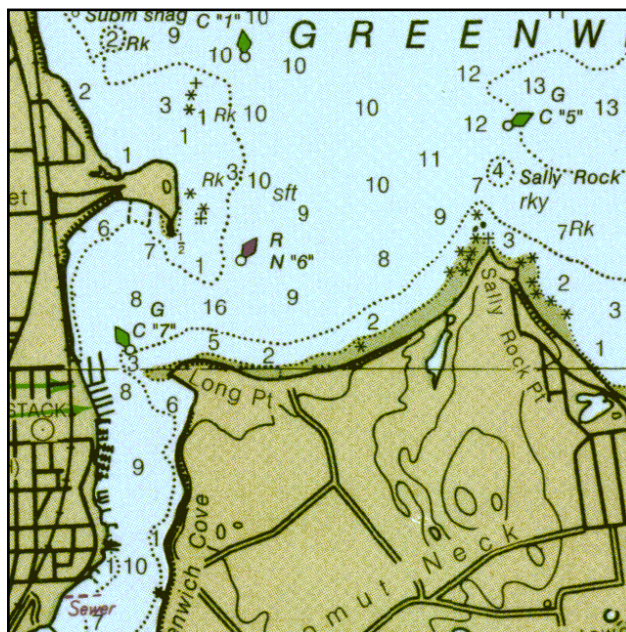
GODDARD PARK

Site Description

Located along Greenwich Bay in the Potowomut section of Warwick, Goddard Memorial State Park supports a wide range of land and water-based recreational activities. A designated “fishing area” is provided near the park’s boat launch along Greenwich Cove to the west, though according to park staff most recreational angling occurs at the two points (Long Point, Sally Rock Point) which bookend the northerly shoreline. This shoreline is also the site of the park beach, a popular summer destination for swimming, sunbathing, and general beach recreation. Public use of the beach is supported by a large parking lot and a facilities building which is host to restrooms, showers, a food concession, and park offices. Within the interior of the park, recreational features include a public golf course, an equestrian area, several athletic fields, and the Carousel Performing Arts Center.

Location Assessment

Bay Location. Goddard Memorial State Park is situated along the Greenwich Bay shoreline, which itself is located along the westerly shoreline of Narragansett Bay. In addition to the beach recreation opportunities afforded by the park, water uses in this area consist primarily of small-craft boating, sailing, and personal watercraft (jet-skis). Harbor uses dominate the inner reaches of Greenwich Bay, particularly within Greenwich Cove to the southwest, which is host to the East Greenwich Marina, the East Greenwich Yacht Club (see aerial photo). A public boat ramp within Goddard Park is also located along Greenwich Cove (see Photo 1).



As reported through the Online Recreational Fishing Survey, common catch within the Greenwich Bay region consists primarily of Striped Bass and Bluefish, both indicated as present spring through fall. Weakfish, while largely absent in other regions of Narragansett Bay, were also reported in significant numbers in this area. Waters in the vicinity of this site partially meet aquatic life support criteria. Causes for water quality impairment include low oxygen concentration, presence of viral and bacterial pathogens, and nutrient enrichment. Due to pathogens, these waters are conditionally closed to shellfishing (and occasionally to swimming) following heavy rains. These waters have been designated a water quality goal of SA (high quality) by the RIDEM (see Appendix B).

Land Location. Goddard Park is located along Potowomut Neck, defined by the Potowomut River to its southeast and Greenwich Cove to its northwest. Geographically isolated from the rest of the City of Warwick, lands along the neck are accessed from Route 1 (Post Road) via Ives Road, which runs along its center. Other land uses along Potowomut Neck are primarily residential, including low density farm estates along the south side of Ives Road and a moderate density residential neighborhood further east. The Potowomut Country Club golf course directly abuts the park to the east (see aerial photo).

At over 480 acres, Goddard Memorial State Park comprises the largest land use along Potowomut Neck. This facility offers a multitude of recreational opportunities and is one of the State's more popular public parks. The landside park consists of an even mix of forested area and open space, including an equestrian area and bridle trails, a nine-hole golf course, athletic fields, numerous picnic areas, and several trails through the wooded portions of the park. The park is open year-round from sunrise to sunset, and an overview map (courtesy RIDEM Division of Parks & Recreation) is provided following the photographs for this section.

The Goddard estate was donated to the State of Rhode Island in 1927, and under the terms of the transfer deed certain provisions must be observed regarding its use and maintenance as a public park. One such provision requires the total equivalent area of forested land at the time of the gift to always be maintained under forestation (i.e., forested land cannot be taken for development).

Environmental Constraints and Permitting. The coastal feature of the Goddard Park study area consists of the sandy beach along Greenwich Bay. Coastal waters along the entire Goddard Park shoreline are designated as Type 1 (Conservation Area) by the CRMC. No eelgrass beds are known to exist in this area.

Facilities Assessment

In addition to its outstanding landside facilities, Goddard Park also offers excellent shoreline access, including a boat launch (and appurtenant parking area) to Greenwich Cove and Goddard Park State Beach along the Greenwich Bay shoreline (see Photos 1, 2). The recently renovated beach waterfront includes a vast, well-landscaped parking lot which provides ample capacity for public use of the beach (Photos 4, 5) and other surrounding park features. One of these is the Carousel Performing Arts Center (Photo 6B), a former carousel currently serving as an event/function hall. Public enjoyment of the beach is augmented by the bathhouse at its westerly end, which hosts restrooms, showers, a food concession, first aid, and park offices (Photo 6A). While there is no charge for admission and parking, certain park facilities require a fee for use (golf course, Carousel Performing Arts Center, picnic area rentals, etc.). There are no trash receptacles on site as the park has a "carry-in, carry-out" trash policy, though both the beach and parking area appear to be clean and well maintained.

Goddard Park currently offers a signed "fishing area" at the boat launch lot along Greenwich Cove (Photo 1), though this spot is somewhat undesirable given its location well within established harbor uses. Park attendants indicated that recreational fishing within the park occurs primarily at Long Point and Sally Rock Point, located at the westerly and easterly ends of the beach shoreline respectively (see nautical chart image; Photos 2, 3,). Both of these locations can be accessed by paths through wooded areas of the park or by walking along the beach shoreline. Waters along Greenwich Bay are relatively calm and shallow, and neither of the above spots appears to offer appreciably better access to deeper waters.

Existing Site Conditions

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Existing Fishing Facilities		X		
Parking				X
Compatibility with Surrounding Land / Water Uses			X	
Statewide Transportation Accessibility / Public Transit			X	
Site Aesthetics			X	
	Low	Medium	High	
Water Quality (see Appendix B)		X		

Priority for Capital Improvements: **Medium**

From purely a facilities/use perspective, it appears that the Goddard Park beach would be appropriate for the development of a moderate-scale pier structure. Such a structure would be best sited near the far (easterly) end of the parking lot (see Photos 5, 7), which is furthest removed from existing beach facilities. This end of the lot is also well removed from the entrance to Greenwich Cove, and it appears that a structure extending approximately 500 feet from the shoreline would not conflict with navigation. Deed restrictions would prohibit the development of additional parking area, however (a) the existing lot is quite ample and appears to have the capacity to support this additional use, and (b) current parking use tends to be concentrated near the westerly end, which is more conveniently located near the bathhouse and carousel. Depending upon the length of the structure and included amenities, the cost to develop a fishing structure at this site would range from moderate to high.

The attractiveness of this location is somewhat hindered by both the relatively shallow depths and fair quality waters within Greenwich Bay. Furthermore, as waters along the entire Goddard Park coastline are designated as Type 1, the development of fishing structure would require a Special Exception in accordance with Section 130 of the *Coastal Resources Management Program* (CRMP). While such a public-access shoreline fishing facility at this location would appear to meet most requirements for a Special Exception (compelling public benefit, no long-term environmental impacts), the applicant would be required to demonstrate that "there is no reasonable alternative means of, or location for, serving the compelling public purposed cited." Given that other evaluation sites within Narragansett Bay (particularly those locations not within Type 1 waters) also appear to be viable for the potential development of public fishing access facilities, it is unlikely that a proposal to develop fishing structure along the Goddard Park beach would meet this requirement.



Photo 1. Signed "Fishing Area" within Goddard Park, near boat launch to Greenwich Harbor. This location does not appear to offer desirable shoreline fishing opportunities.



Photo 2. Looking west along Goddard Park Beach. Long Point and Greenwich Harbor are visible far right.



Photo 3. Looking east to Sally Rock Point from easterly end of beach area.



Photo 4. Beach parking lot looking east from the bathhouse.



Photo 5. Beach parking area looking west from easterly end.



Photos 6A and 6B. Park facilities at the beach site. The bathhouse (left) hosts restrooms, showers, a food concession, first aid, and park offices, while the Carousel Performing Arts Center (right) can be rented for functions and special events.



Photo 7. Looking south along the park access road from the bathhouse.



Photo 8. Greenwich Bay shoreline at the easterly end of the beach area.
This spot appears to offer the best opportunity for the potential
development of fishing structure at the site.

